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Editorial: Congress exempts themselves from AHCA

Just how unpopular is the American Health Care Act, which just barely passed the House of Representatives on Thursday? The House Republicans who voted for it don't even want it for themselves.

As Vox's Sarah Kliff reported April 25, Rep. Tom MacArthur, R-New Jersey, authored the amendment that exempts members of Congress and their staff.

"The new Republican amendment … would allow states to waive out of Obamacare's ban on preexisting conditions. This means that insurers could once again, under certain circumstances, charge sick people higher premiums than healthy people," she reported. "Republican legislators liked this policy well enough to offer it in a new amendment. They do not, however, seem to like it enough to have it apply to themselves and their staff. … Obamacare requires all members of Congress and their staff to purchase coverage through the health law's marketplace, just like Obamacare enrollees. The politics of that plank were simple enough, meant to demonstrate that if the coverage in this law were good enough for

Americans, it should be good enough for their representatives in Washington.”

This ill-conceived notion reaped a healthy backlash, and rightly so. The next day, MacArthur’s office issued a statement saying they would introduce separate legislation to address the loophole.

“Congressman MacArthur does not believe Members of Congress or their staff should receive special treatment and is working with House Leadership to make absolutely clear that Members of Congress and staff are subject to the same rules, provisions, and protections as all other Americans,” it read.

However, MacArthur refused to take blame for its insertion in the first place, saying it was inserted at the request of the Senate Budget Committee.

“We did not write it, did not draft it, and did not add it,” an SCB aide told Kliff.

As to whether this bit of hypocrisy will be addressed in the future, only time will tell. What’s staggering is this craven idea ever made it onto paper in the first place.